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**Reply to: Jacksonville, FL**

August 22, 2001

**SEIZURE OF 24 KILOGRAMS OF COCAINE AT JACKSONVILLE  
BUS STATION RESULTS IN COCAINE CONSPIRACY INDICTMENT**

Two New York residents, Brayan Cortez-Ramos and Jose Ramon Arcos-Escamilla, have been indicted by a federal grand jury for conspiracy to distribute cocaine. Cortez-Ramos, age 25, and Arcos-Escamilla, age 29, were arrested at the Greyhound Bus Station in downtown Jacksonville on the morning of August 20, 2001. Accordingly to federal criminal complaints filed on that day, their arrest followed the discovery of approximately 24 kilograms, or nearly 53 pounds, of cocaine concealed in two suitcases. It is expected that both men will be arraigned later this week.

Cortez-Ramos and Arcos-Escamilla are charged with conspiracy to distribute cocaine between August 16 and August 20, 2001, in Jacksonville and elsewhere. If convicted of the conspiracy, the defendants face a mandatory 10 years imprisonment and up to life imprisonment and \$4 million in fines. In addition to the conspiracy charge, both defendants are charged with one count of possession with intent to distribute cocaine. The defendants face an additional minimum ten years imprisonment and up to life imprisonment on the drug charge.

The charges in this case resulted from a joint investigation by the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) task force, which includes members from the U.S. Drug

Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Customs Service, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office, and the U.S. Border Patrol. The prosecution of this case will be handled by Assistant United States Attorney Rodney Brown.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal law and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.